

WILLINGHAM • BUCKINGHAM • BRAUN

F A B L E S

VERTIGO



135 Jan '14
suggested for
mature readers
vertigocomics.com



HELLO?
DO YOU RECOGNIZE MY VOICE?



GOOD. I DON'T WANT TO USE OUR NAMES OVER AN OPEN LINE.
YOU OWE ME A *DEBT*, AND IT'S FINALLY TIME TO PAY IT.



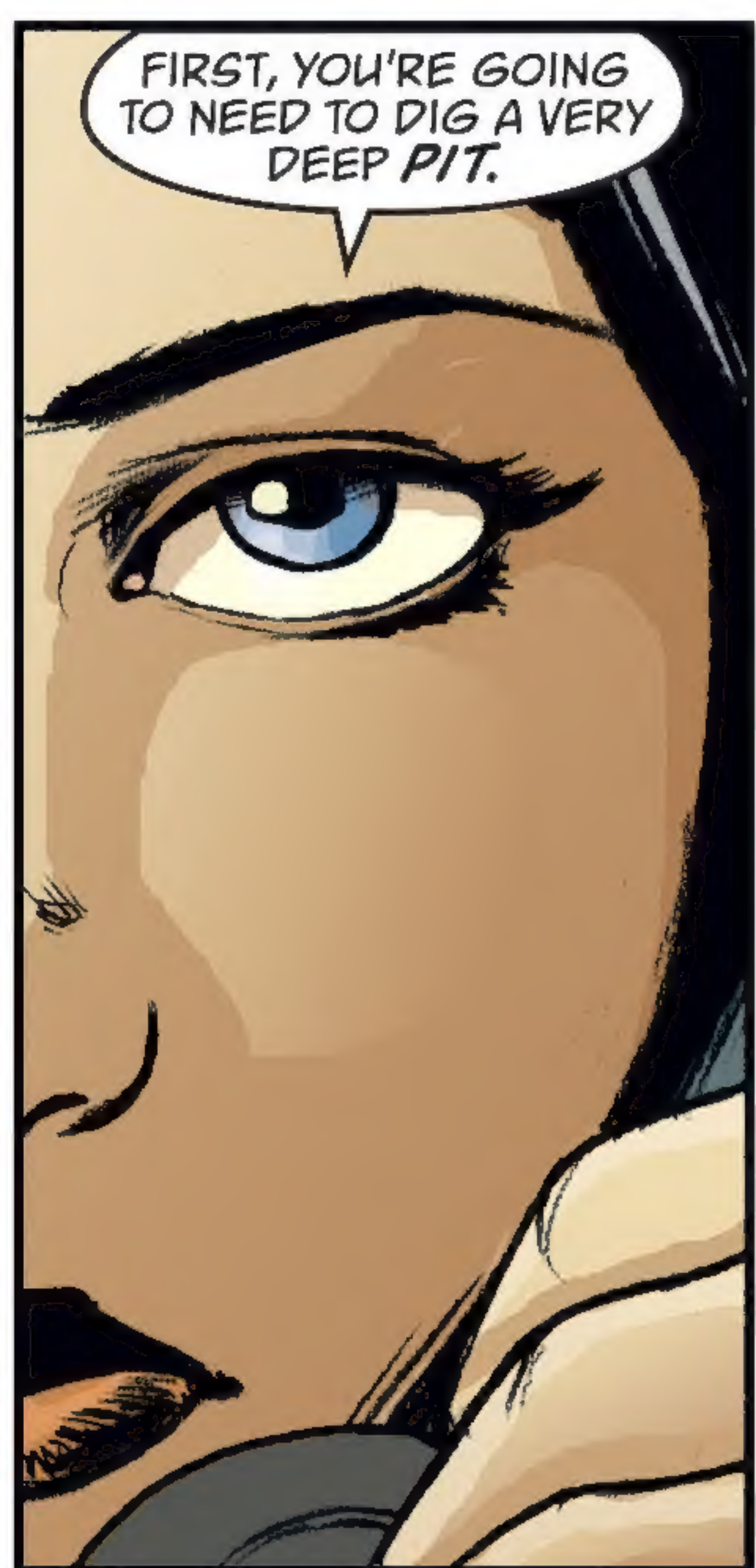
YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT MY SISTER'S NEW CAMELOT PROJECT?
YOU'RE GOING TO INTERCEPT ONE OF HER *KNIGHTS* THE FIRST TIME HE'S SENT ON A QUEST.



IT CAN NEVER GET BACK TO ME.



NOW, HERE ARE THE DETAILS.



FIRST, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO DIG A VERY DEEP *PIT*.

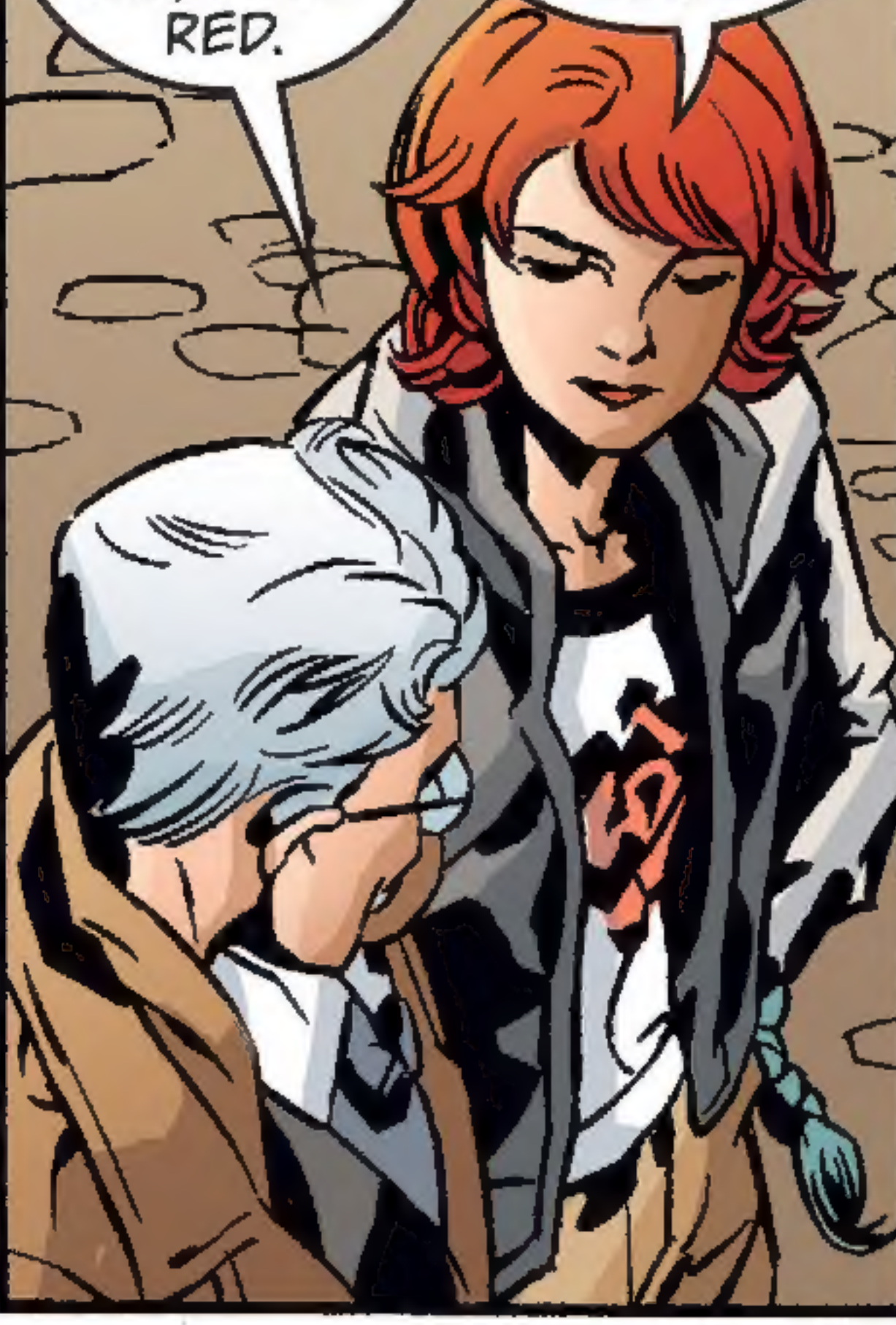


ASSEMBLE
Part Four of
Camelot

Bill Willingham plot & script, creator	Mark Buckingham layouts & script, pencils 2-5
Russ Braun finishes 1, 6-20	Steve Leialoha inks 2-3
Lee Loughridge colors	Todd Klein letters
Greg Ruth cover	Sara Miller asst. ed.
Andrew Pepoy inks 4-5	Shelly Bond editor

THANK YOU FOR COMING DOWN TO SEE ME, ROSE RED.

NO PROBLEM. UNLESS THERE IS A PROBLEM?



I'M SAD TO SAY IT'S ABOUT **MONEY** AGAIN. I KNOW I SOUND LIKE A BROKEN RECORD, BUT IT'S **ALWAYS** ABOUT MONEY.

EVEN WITH THE RECENT **GOLD** INFUSION, AND THE **FREE** LABOR FROM WEYLAND SMITH, I CAN'T SEE HOW WE'RE ABLE TO AFFORD AN ENTIRELY **NEW** CASTLE UP AT THE FARM.

WE **NEED** ONE. THE FARM POPULATION COULD **DOUBLE** IN SIZE OVER THE NEXT MONTHS, AND...

THE NEW ROUND TABLE NEEDS A CASTLE TO **HOUSE** IT, ALONG WITH THE KNIGHTS WHO'LL EVENTUALLY SERVE THERE.

BUT WE ALREADY **HAVE** A GIANT CASTLE HERE! AND WE GOT IT FOR **FREE!**

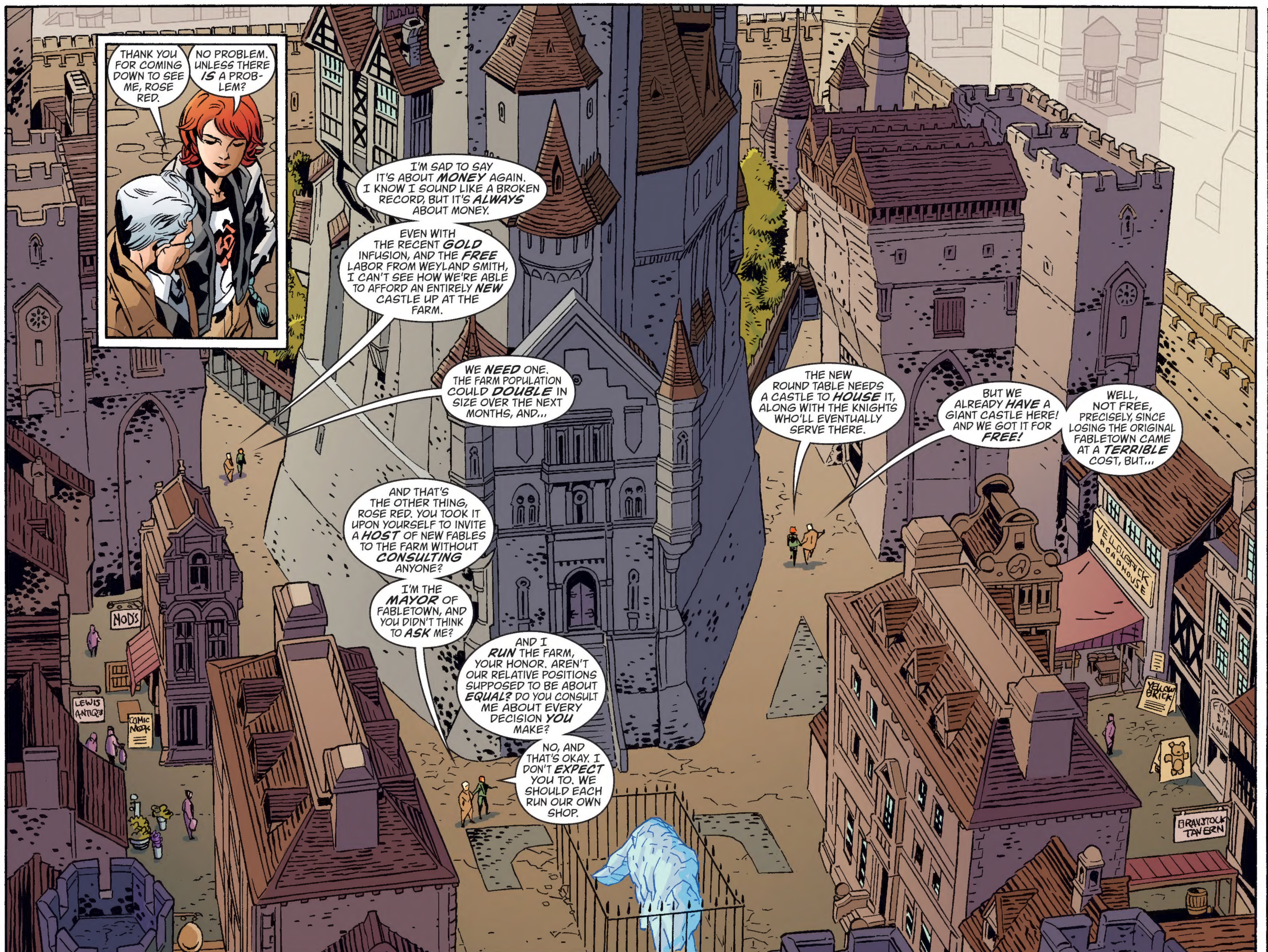
WELL, NOT FREE, PRECISELY, SINCE LOSING THE ORIGINAL FABLETOWN CAME AT A **TERRIBLE** COST, BUT...

AND THAT'S THE OTHER THING, ROSE RED. YOU TOOK IT UPON YOURSELF TO INVITE A **HOST** OF NEW FABLES TO THE FARM WITHOUT **CONSULTING** ANYONE?

I'M THE **MAYOR** OF FABLETOWN, AND YOU DIDN'T THINK TO **ASK** ME?

AND I **RUN** THE FARM, YOUR HONOR. AREN'T OUR RELATIVE POSITIONS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT **EQUAL**? DO YOU CONSULT ME ABOUT EVERY DECISION **YOU** MAKE?

NO, AND THAT'S OKAY. I DON'T **EXPECT** YOU TO. WE SHOULD EACH RUN OUR OWN SHOP.



MY POINT IS, WE FINALLY HAVE MORE ROOM THAN WE NEED IN FABLETOWN. WE COULD HOUSE YOUR NEW ARRIVALS HERE.

NOT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN YOU SOLVE, KING COLE. LESS THAN HALF THE NEWBIES CAN PASS AS HUMAN.

WE NEED TO KEEP THEM AT THE FARM, OUT OF SIGHT FROM THE MUNDYS.

I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PONY UP A NEW CASTLE. MAYBE MORE THAN ONE, IN TIME.

YOU'RE KILLING ME. WE CAN'T AFFORD THIS NOW.

AND WE HAVEN'T EVEN *BEGUN* TO TALK ABOUT THIS NEW FALLING OUT BETWEEN YOU AND SNOW, OR THE UGLY BUSINESS OF SETTING PRINCE BRANDISH FREE.

I KNOW. IT'S A BIG MESS. BUT SNOW WILL *FORGIVE* ME EVENTUALLY. IT'S WHAT SHE DOES.

AND EVEN THOUGH THE THING WITH BRANDISH IS HARDER TO *JUSTIFY*, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW I'M GOING TO GET MY WAY IN THE END.

SO WHY NOT SAVE TIME AND SURRENDER *NOW*?

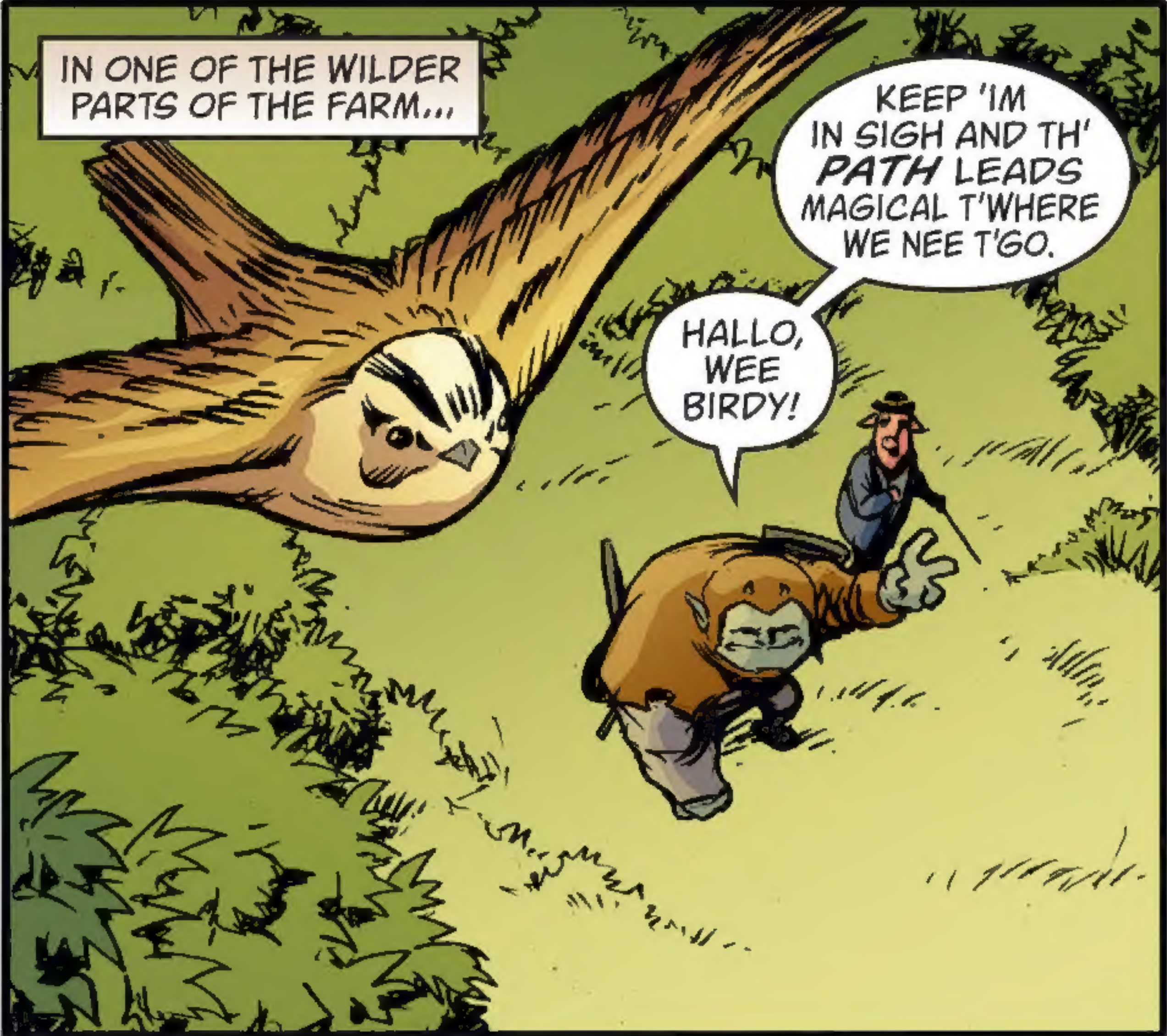


UPSTATE NEW YORK.



FALLOW TH' WEE BIRDY.

IN ONE OF THE WILDER PARTS OF THE FARM...



HALLO, WEE BIRDY!

KEEP 'IM IN SIGH AND TH' PATH LEADS MAGICAL T'WHERE WE NEED T'GO.



AN WER D'YE HAIL FROM, MISTER TASTY?

IT'S TUMLEY.

F'OURSE, MISTER YUMMY.

TUMLEY. I COME FROM--



D'YE THIN THEY'LL HA THOUGH T'AVE *DINNER* READY? WE'VE SURE COME A FAIR AN UNGRY DISTANCE, W'HAVE.

UHM...



AN I'VE BEEN VER GOOD LIKE 'IS GLORY TOL ME. "N'MORE EAT THA *TALKY* FOLK," E SAID.

YES, YES! *EXCELLENT* ADVICE!

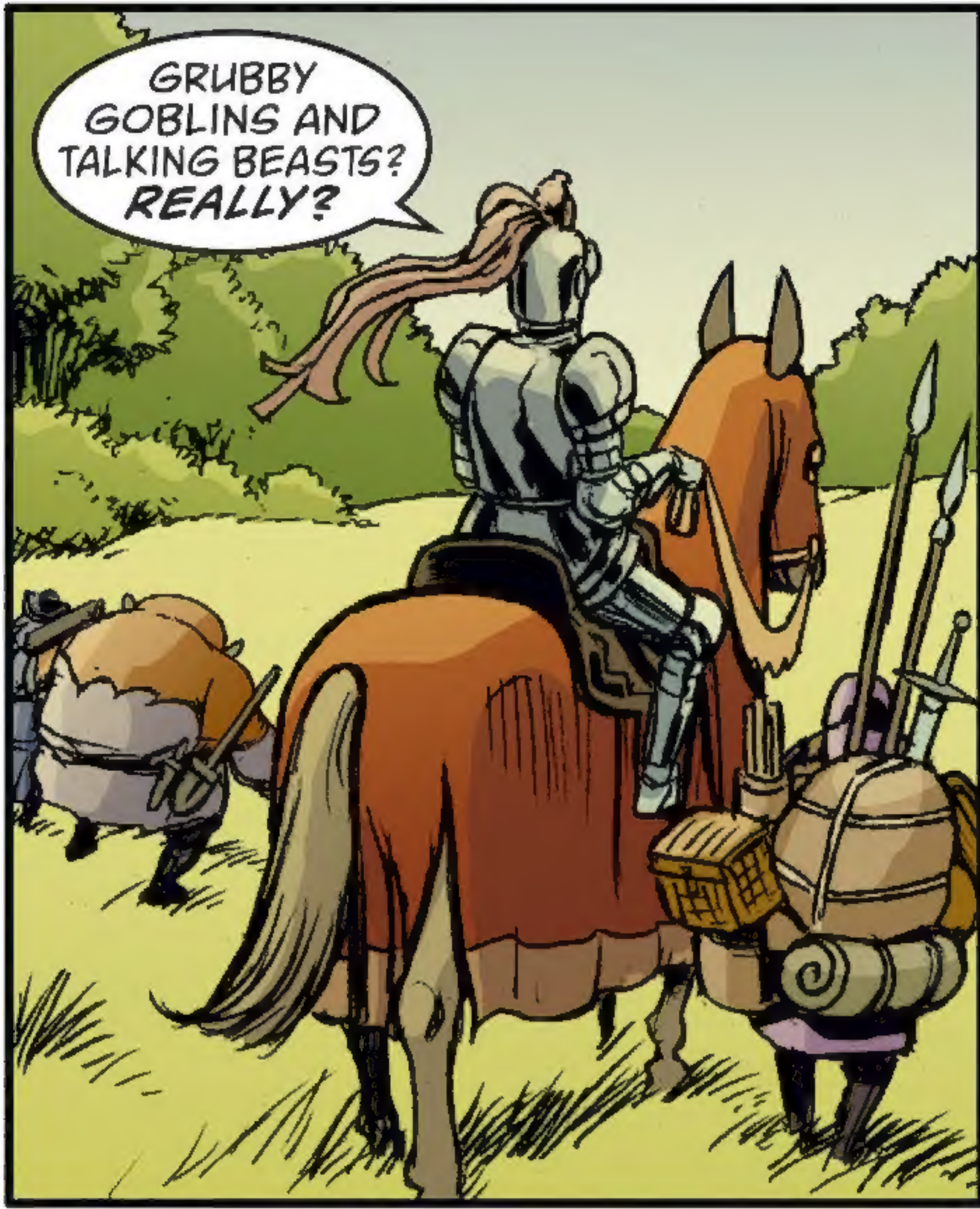
BUT TA TELL YE TH ENTIRE TRUTH, B'NOW I FIN M'VER SELF SO HUNGRED I COULD EAT A...



WHAS Y'NAME AGAIN, YE PORKY FELLER?

T-TUMLEY.

NOW I COULD EAT A TUMLEY, ENTIRE.



GRUBBY GOBLINS AND TALKING BEASTS? REALLY?



IF THAT IS THE CALIBER OF APPLICANTS FOR THIS NEW CAMELOT, I FEAR FOR ITS PUISSANCE AND PURPOSE, YOUNG SQUELCH.

YES, SIRE.



WHAT ABOUT YOU, THERE?

IF A LOW VILLAIN LIKE YOU THINKS TO FIND A PLACE, WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT THE VENTURE?



SPEAK UP, RUFFIAN. CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

MAYBE HE IS AFFLICTED, SIRE?

MMM. MAYBE NO TONGUE AT ALL.



AT LEAST THE LOW CHARACTERS ON OUR ROAD WILL HAVE THE HONOR OF WATCHING A TRUE KNIGHT WIN HIS PLACE.

MAYBE UNDER ALL THAT MUCK AND MUD THERE'S THE RAW METAL OF ANOTHER KNIGHT'S SQUIRE. CRUDE AT FIRST, BUT TRAINABLE. LIKE YOU, EH, SQUELCH?

YES, SIRE. THANKING YOU, SIRE.



I RATHER THINK WE'RE NOT THE FIRST TO ARRIVE.





EXCUSE US. WEYLAND WANTS THIS MOVED.

GOODBYE COMFY SEAT. BACK TO NAPPING ON THE GRASS.

DID ROSE RED CHANGE HER MIND? AREN'T WE DOING A ROUND TABLE?

SILLY ME. I ACTUALLY BELIEVED SHE'D FOLLOW THROUGH THIS TIME.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. WE WERE JUST TOLD TO MOVE THESE OUT OF THE WAY.

SO WHICH ONE IS THE NEW KING?

BETTER NOT BE THE BUNNY.

I SERVED UNDER A BUNNY KING ONCE AND A LOT OF GOOD FRIENDS *DIED* ON HIS WHIMSICAL QUESTS. NEVER AGAIN.

LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE SEATS FOR *SIX* KNIGHTS AT THIS NEW ROUND TABLE. MEANS THE COMPETITION IS GOING TO BE FIERCE.

I WONDER IF WE *KILL* TO WINNOW DOWN THE APPLICANTS, OR JUST MAIM?







RIGHT ABOUT *THERE* SHOULD DO NICELY, GRINDER.

WHAT'S THIS NOW?

NO TABLE? WE'RE GOING TO BE KNIGHTS OF A LOG?

WHOOOOOMM!

B

B



THAT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS THE GRAND NEW ROUND TABLE.

SO IT'S GOING TO BE A KNIGHTS-WITH-MANY-SPLINTERS THING?



WAIT AND SEE, FOX. DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH NOW, BUT GIVE ME A DAY OR TWO AND IT'LL BE CARVED NICE AND FINE.



THE HELL--?

WATCH IT. SEWER TRENCH.



YOU OUGHT TO PUT UP A FENCE.

OR MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING, LACKWIT.

I'VE ENOUGH TO DO WITHOUT BABYSITTING FOOLS.



IS THAT--?

GODS BELOW! PRINCE BRANDISH!

WHO?

HEIR TO THE GOLDEN REALM!



FIRST SON OF THE HOUSE OF DESCRY. NOT LOOKING SO NOBLE NOW.

YOU DARE SPEAK TO ME?



MADE OUR LIVES MISERABLE. USED TO SWIM IN GOLD. NOW SWIMMING IN SHIT?

I CONFESS I LOVE THIS WORLD ALREADY.



TICK ON A PIG'S WHORE!

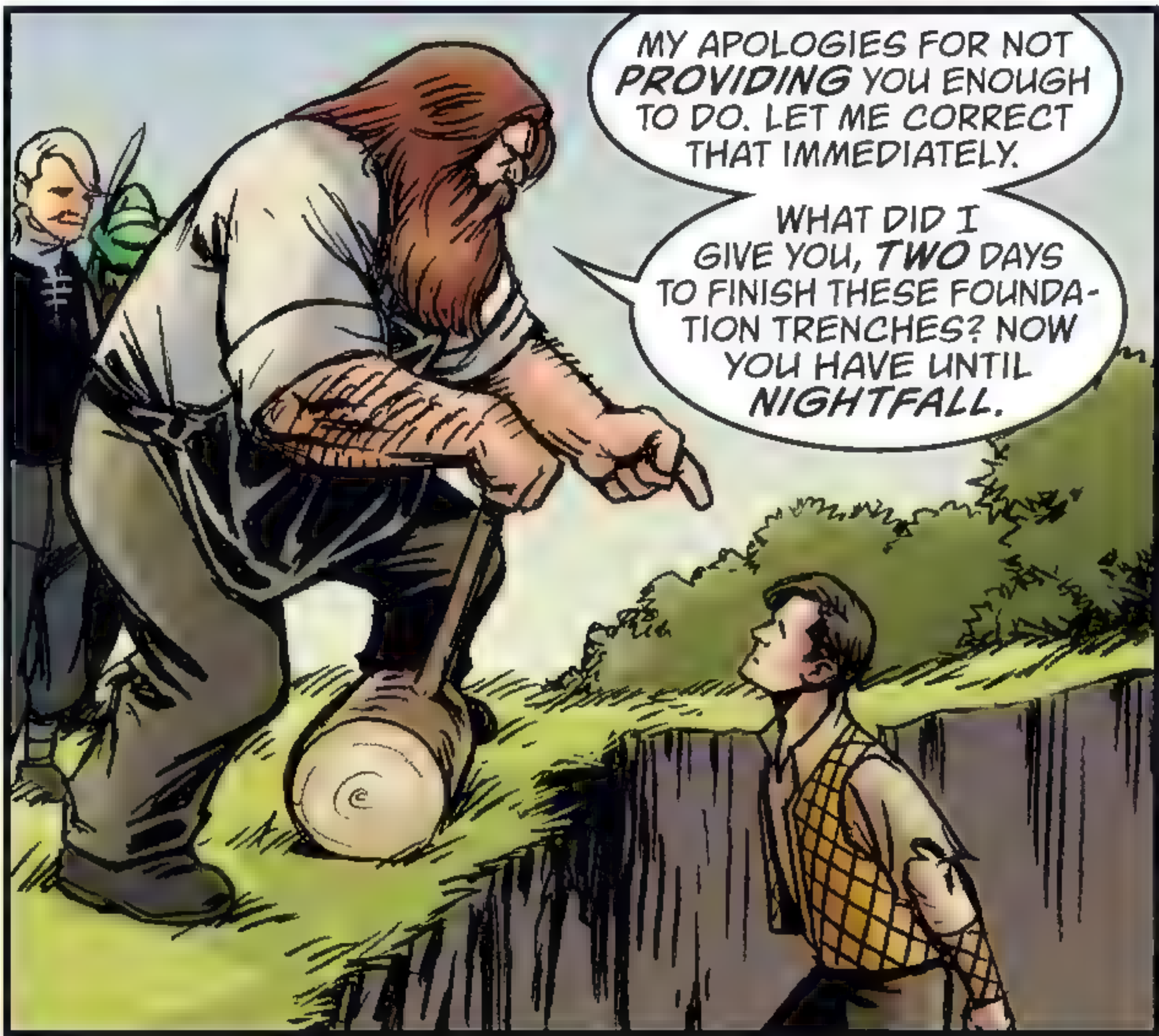
I'LL TEACH YOU RESPECT FOR YOUR BETTERS!



DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM HERE?



IF YOU'VE TIME TO STOP AND CHAT, YOU'VE TIME FOR MORE DUTIES.



MY APOLOGIES FOR NOT PROVIDING YOU ENOUGH TO DO. LET ME CORRECT THAT IMMEDIATELY.

WHAT DID I GIVE YOU, TWO DAYS TO FINISH THESE FOUNDATION TRENCHES? NOW YOU HAVE UNTIL NIGHTFALL.



YOU'RE... TOO... KIND.



ROSE IS HERE!

HMM?

TOO KIND BY HALF.

I'LL HAVE TO BE EXTRA CREATIVE IN THINKING OF THE BEST WAY TO REWARD YOU SOMEDAY.



OH.



SO MANY.



UHM...

HELLO,
EVERYONE!

I HAVE TO
CONFESS, I'M A BIT
TAKEN ABACK. I DIDN'T
REALIZE HOW MANY OF
YOU WOULD ANSWER
THE CALL.

BUT
TOO MANY IS THE
BEST PROBLEM
TO HAVE.

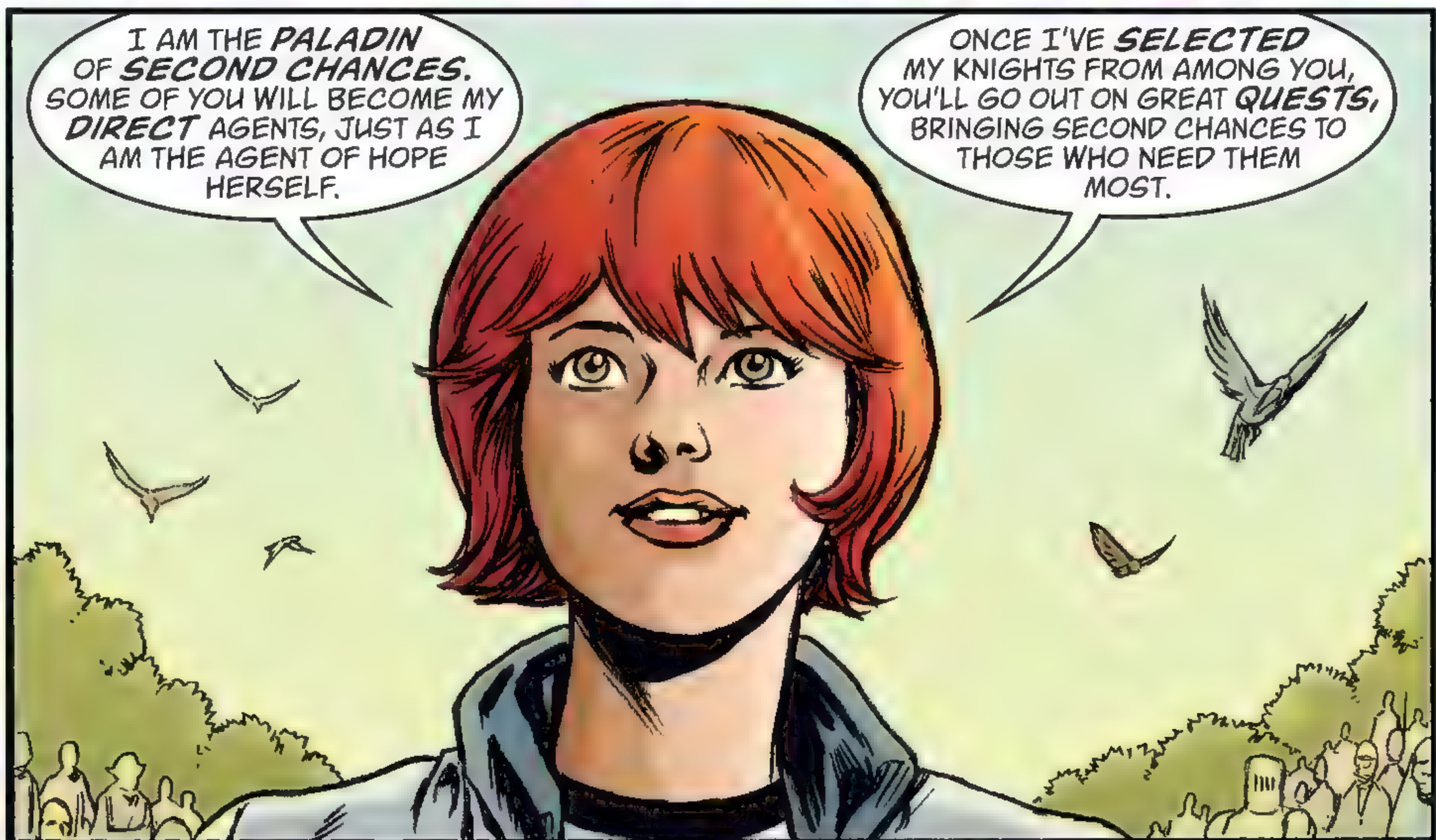
THANK YOU
SO MUCH FOR
COMING!



YOU'RE IN THIS WORLD AT MY INVITATION, THROUGH THE MECHANICS OF A MIGHTY POWER.

THE POWER OF HOPE.

BUT GETTING YOU HERE IS JUST THE FIRST OF MANY STEPS TO COME.



I AM THE PALADIN OF SECOND CHANCES. SOME OF YOU WILL BECOME MY DIRECT AGENTS, JUST AS I AM THE AGENT OF HOPE HERSELF.

ONCE I'VE SELECTED MY KNIGHTS FROM AMONG YOU, YOU'LL GO OUT ON GREAT QUESTS, BRINGING SECOND CHANCES TO THOSE WHO NEED THEM MOST.



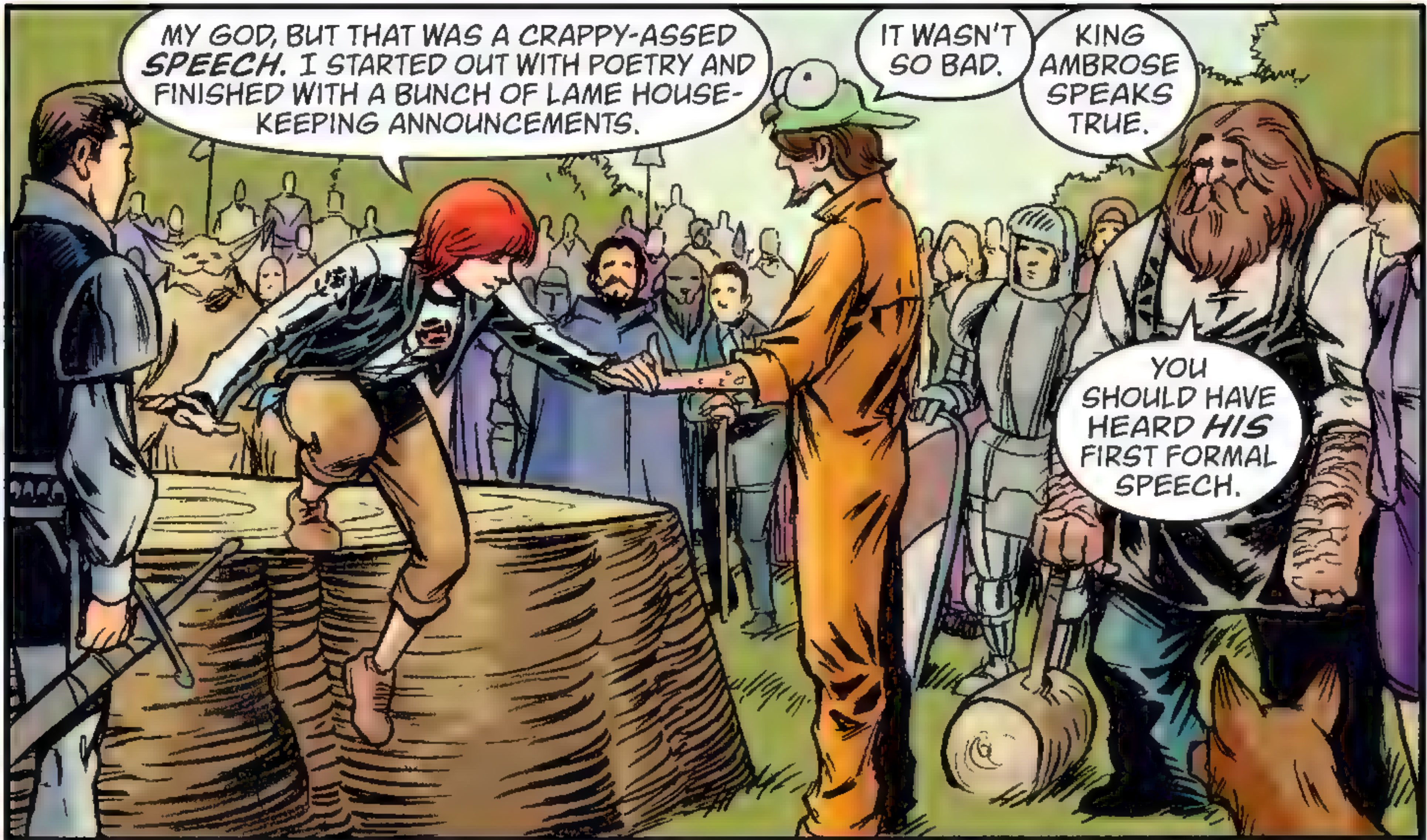
UH...I GUESS THAT'S IT FOR NOW.

OH NO, WAIT. PRACTICAL STUFF, RIGHT? UH--WE HAVE TENTS COMING OUT FOR YOU.



AND FOOD.

UNTIL THEN, A HARD AND FAST NO-EATING-EACH-OTHER RULE IS IN EFFECT, FOR AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE.



MY GOD, BUT THAT WAS A CRAPPY-ASSED SPEECH. I STARTED OUT WITH POETRY AND FINISHED WITH A BUNCH OF LAME HOUSE-KEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS.

IT WASN'T SO BAD.

KING AMBROSE SPEAKS TRUE.

YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD HIS FIRST FORMAL SPEECH.



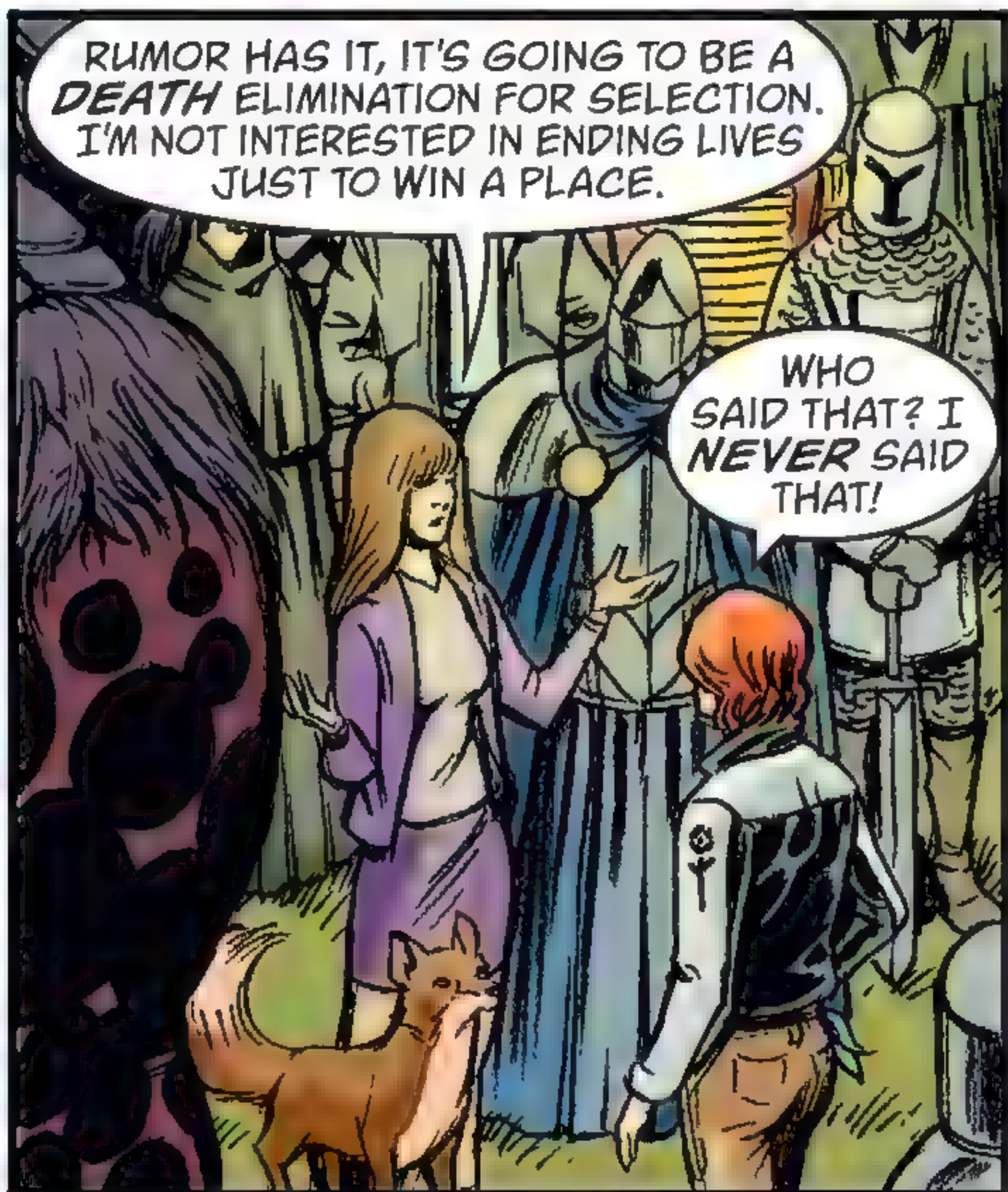
HOW WILL WE DECIDE WHO MAKES THE GRADE?

WE WON'T DECIDE. I WILL.



WILL THE FINAL BUNCH EACH GET A SEPARATE CASTLE? OR WILL IT BE LIKE A FRAT HOUSE KIND OF THING?

WE'LL SEE, REYNARD.



RUMOR HAS IT, IT'S GOING TO BE A DEATH ELIMINATION FOR SELECTION. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN ENDING LIVES JUST TO WIN A PLACE.

WHO SAID THAT? I NEVER SAID THAT!



BUT THERE OUGHT TO BE SOME KIND OF CONTEST.





PROVIDENTIAL
HELP FROM GREAT
POWERS THAT WANT
THEIR **GOD OF
WOLVES** BACK?

OR A LESS
THAN BENEVOLENT
POWER THAT WANTS
ITS PRE-REFORMED
MONSTER
BACK.

HMMMMMMM.

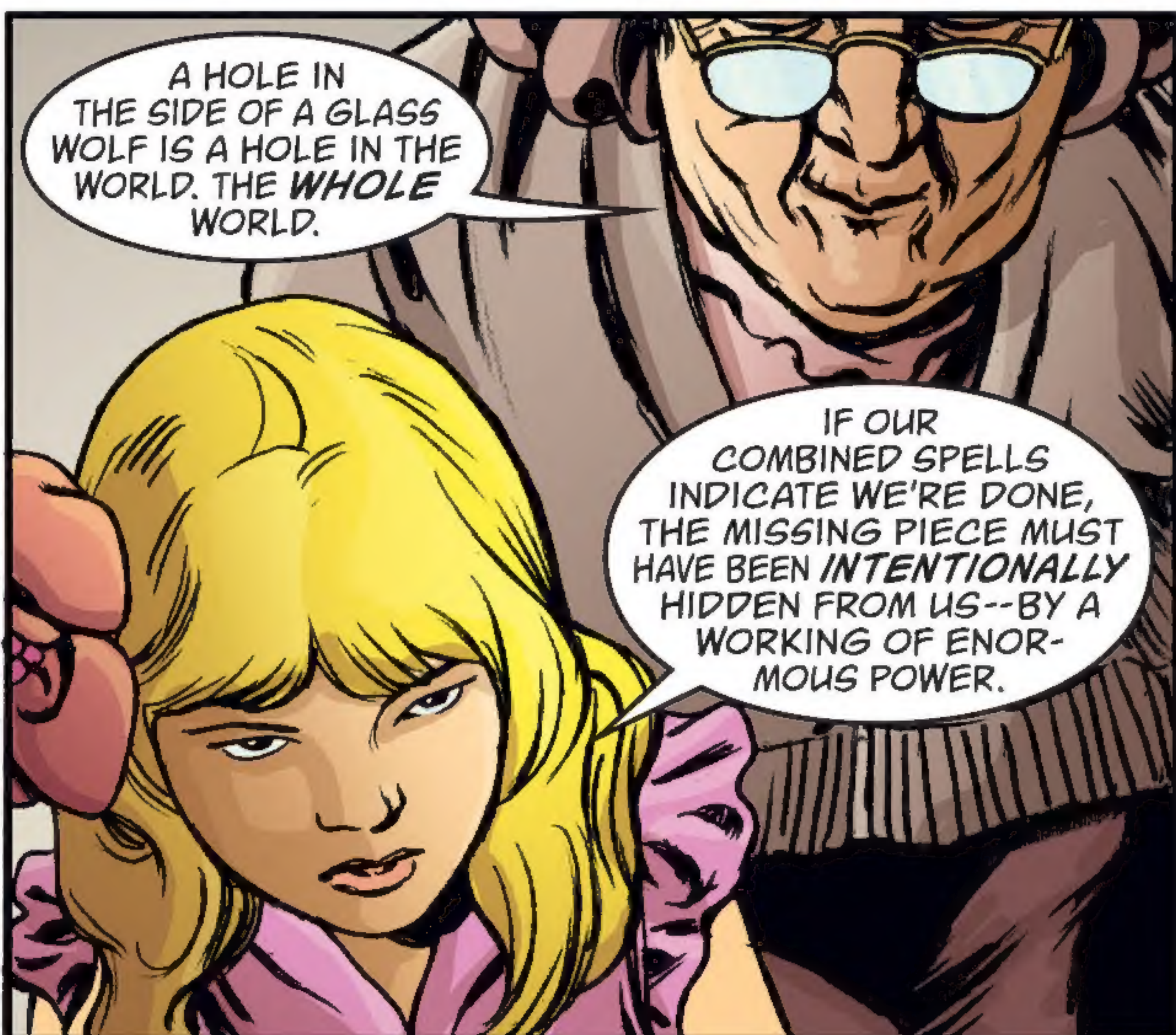




WE
AREN'T DONE
YET.

A PIECE
IS STILL
MISSING.

HOW? ALL
THE SPELLS ARE
COMPLETE. WE'VE EVEN
RECOVERED THE TINY
SPECKS OF GLASS.



A HOLE IN
THE SIDE OF A GLASS
WOLF IS A HOLE IN THE
WORLD. THE *WHOLE*
WORLD.

IF OUR
COMBINED SPELLS
INDICATE WE'RE DONE,
THE MISSING PIECE MUST
HAVE BEEN *INTENTIONALLY*
HIDDEN FROM US--BY A
WORKING OF ENOR-
MOUS POWER.



WHERE
COULD IT
BE?



"WHO HAS
SUCH POWER?"

WOLF
MANOR.

GATHER
AROUND, CHILDREN.
FAMILY MEETING.

THIS IS VERY
IMPORTANT,
SO LISTEN
CLOSELY.

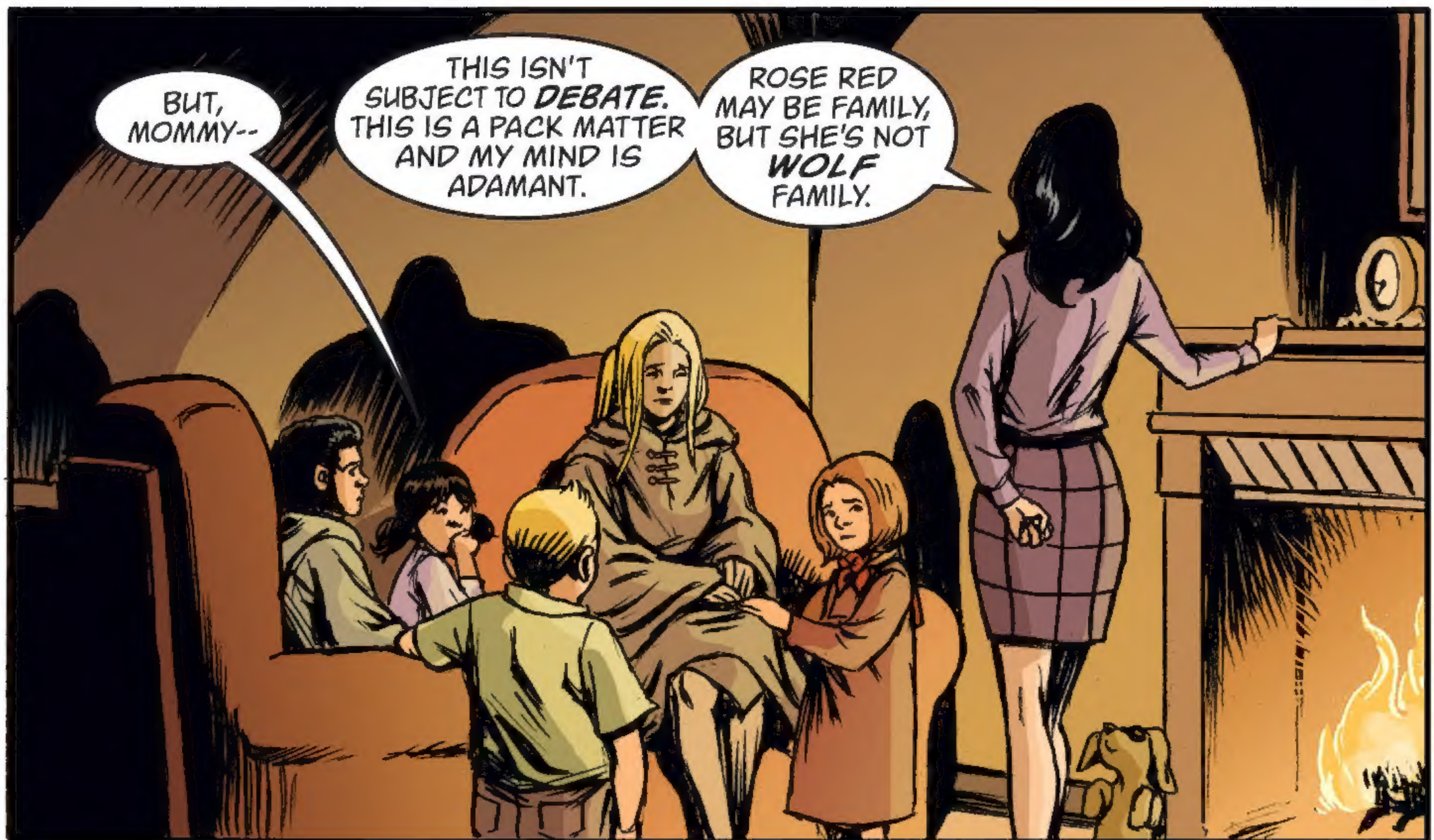
WE'VE SUFFERED
SOME TERRIBLE *BLOWS*
LATELY, AND THE DANGER
ISN'T OVER.

YOUR AUNTIE
ROSE ISN'T BAD OR
EVIL, BUT SHE'S DONE
SOMETHING THAT
COULD *HARM* THE
REST OF US.

AND I'M
NOT GOING TO
LET ANYTHING HARM
ANOTHER ONE OF US.
NOT *ONE MORE*
LOSS.

SO I'M
SORRY TO SAY
THAT AUNT ROSE IS
OFF LIMITS FROM
NOW ON.

IF SHE
TRIES TO
APPROACH
OR CONTACT
ANY OF YOU,
FLY *FAST*
AWAY FROM
HER AND
TELL
ME.



BUT, MOMMY--

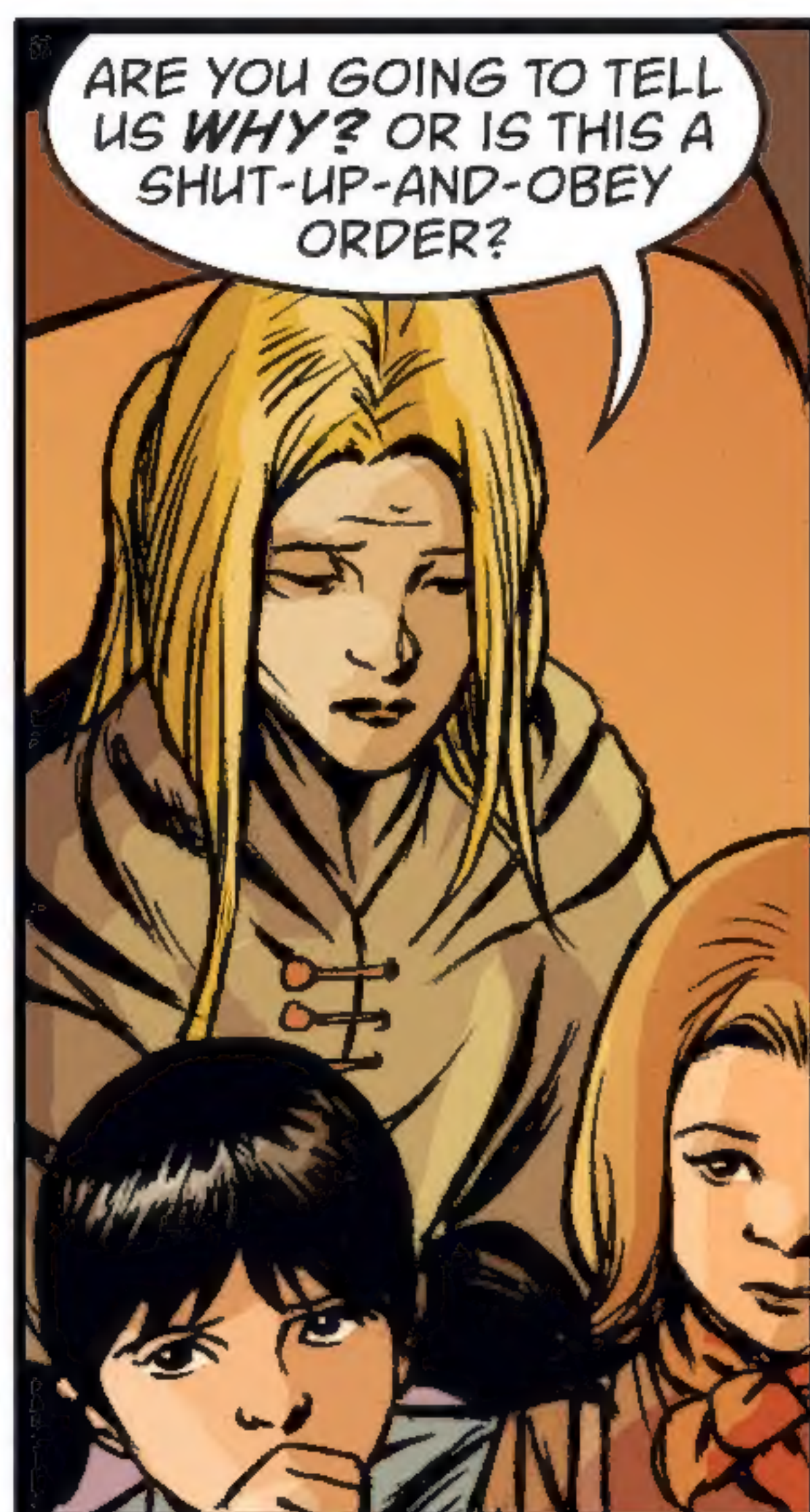
THIS ISN'T SUBJECT TO **DEBATE**. THIS IS A PACK MATTER AND MY MIND IS ADAMANT.

ROSE RED MAY BE FAMILY, BUT SHE'S NOT **WOLF** FAMILY.



FROM NOW ON, THERE'S **US** AND THEN EVERY-ONE ELSE.

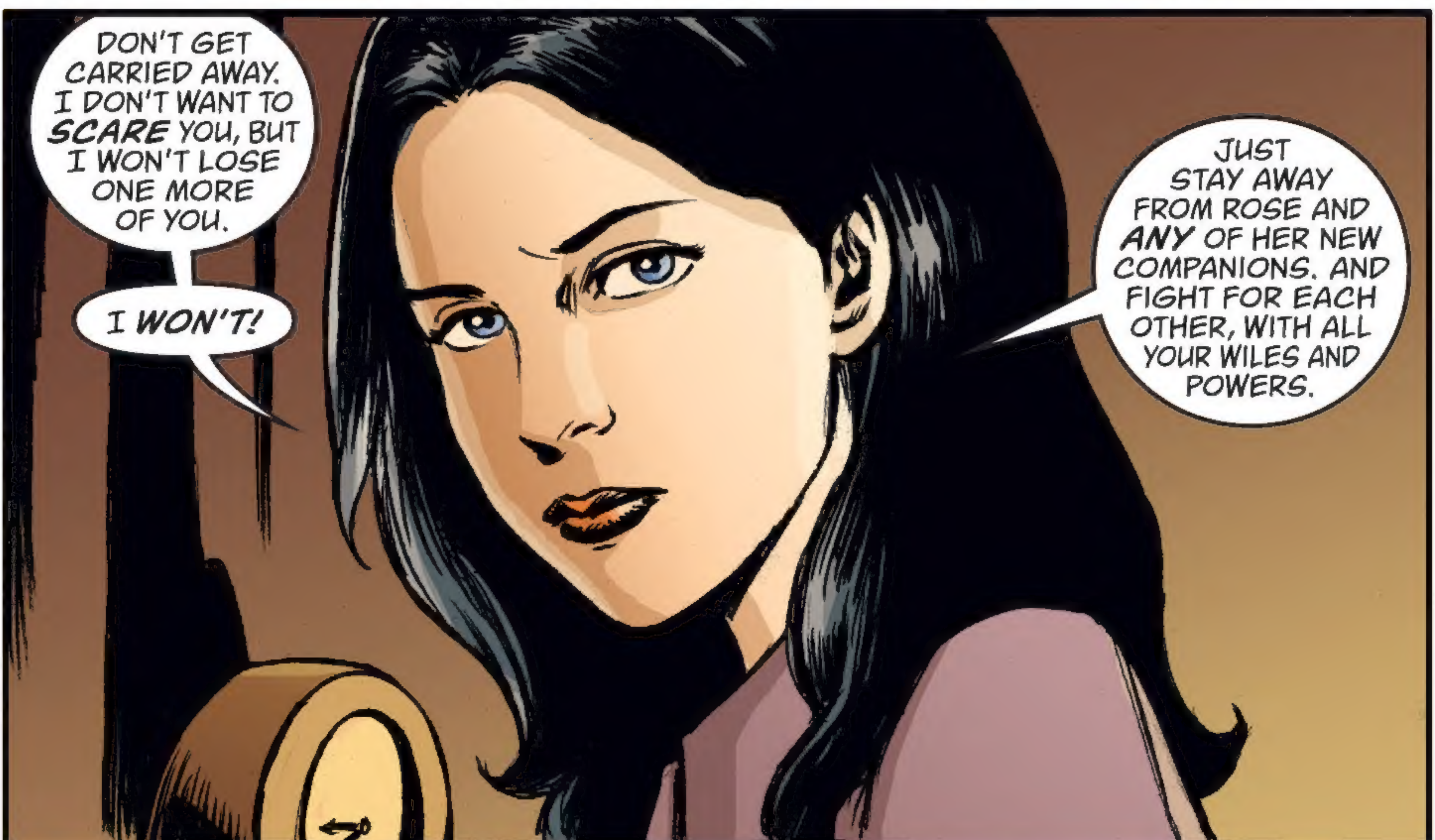
AND WE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.



ARE YOU GOING TO TELL US **WHY**? OR IS THIS A SHUT-UP-AND-OBEY ORDER?



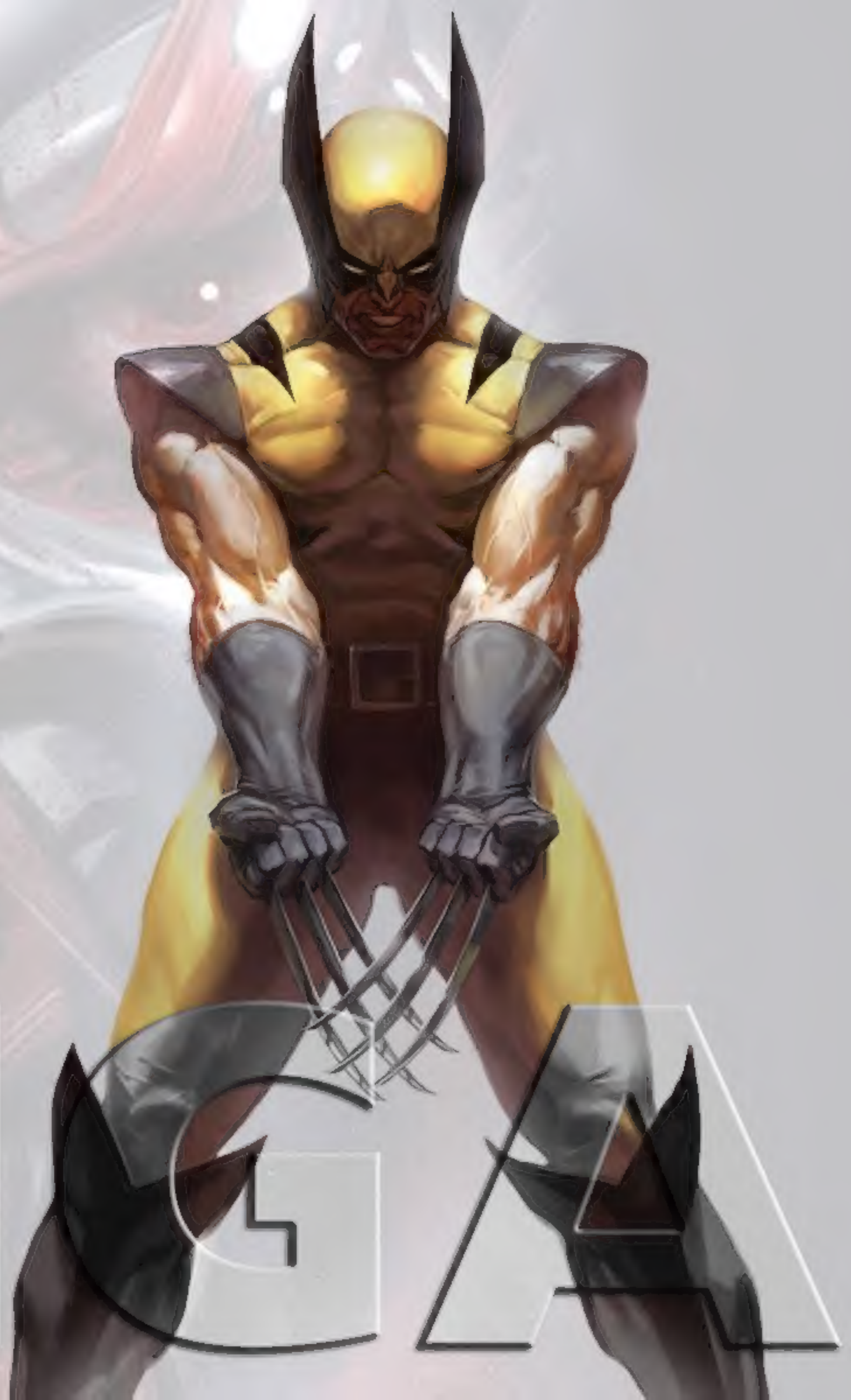
DARKNESS COMING. BUT AIMED DIRECTLY AT US THIS TIME.



DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY. I DON'T WANT TO **SCARE** YOU, BUT I WON'T LOSE ONE MORE OF YOU.

I WON'T!

JUST STAY AWAY FROM ROSE AND ANY OF HER NEW COMPANIONS. AND FIGHT FOR EACH OTHER, WITH ALL YOUR WILES AND POWERS.



NATHAN